

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE GRANT RECIPIENT FOR 1997: REVEGETATION OF NINE MILE RUN**

**Grant Recipient:** City of Pittsburgh, PA  
**Grant Title:** Revegetation of Nine Mile Run  
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**Project Period:** 7/1/98 - 12/31/00  
**Affected Areas:** Nine Mile Run Watershed, Pittsburgh, PA

### **INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT RATIONALE**

The Nine Mile Run site consists of 238 acres of land formerly used as a landfill for slag -- an industrial by-product of the steel-making process. Starting in 1923, enough material was dumped in the stream valley to fill the entire lower floodplain area, and to alter the course of the stream. The City of Pittsburgh plans to develop the Nine Mile Run site into a compact urban community model and to extend Frick Park's boundaries to connect it to the Monongahela River. Both the technical solutions for the remediation of this site and the emphasis on park and greenway development and native vegetation make this project unique and on the cutting edge of environmentally responsible development.

This project will also investigate techniques for revegetating an industrial waste site. By looking at regeneration on Nine Mile Run's slag lands as experimental, there is an opportunity to watch, measure, tinker, and demonstrate to a wider brownfields constituency. This approach overtly acknowledges that no one technique has yet been developed; that conventional reclamation may, in fact, hinder other, more creative solutions. The results will provide an important scientific base for ecological management and design of this and similar brownfields sites.

### **SCOPE OF WORK**

Funds obtained through the SDCG will allow for the completion of the following:

1. Assess and research the range of plant species needed to create an environmentally diverse and sound habitat;
2. Test and research the efforts needed to preserve the existing flora and fauna in the Nine Mile Run stream corridor;
3. Test and research the maximum slope of the slag hillsides that can support the growth of vegetation;
4. Test the types, quantities & sources of organic materials that could be mixed with the slag to support the growth of vegetation; and
5. Test appropriate methods of mixing or applying organic materials to the slag to enable it to support a variety of plant life

The SDCG will allow for the completion of short term assessment, analysis and testing requirements which will aid in guiding and implementing aspects of the larger project. Once a revegetation protocol has been established, greening of the remaining areas with native vegetation and other aspects of site remediation will begin. The first phase of housing development is scheduled for 1998, followed by site revegetation and park development. The project's ultimate goal is the development of the Nine Mile Run community and open space.

Analyses and recommendations developed will be transferable to other slag cities as well as other types of brownfields sites. The City of Pittsburgh specifically plans to share information gathered and technologies developed with the Mon Valley communities facing similar challenges to reuse brownfields sites.

### **PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

STUDIO for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University

State of Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Pittsburgh's Urban Redevelopment Authority, Environmental City Initiative